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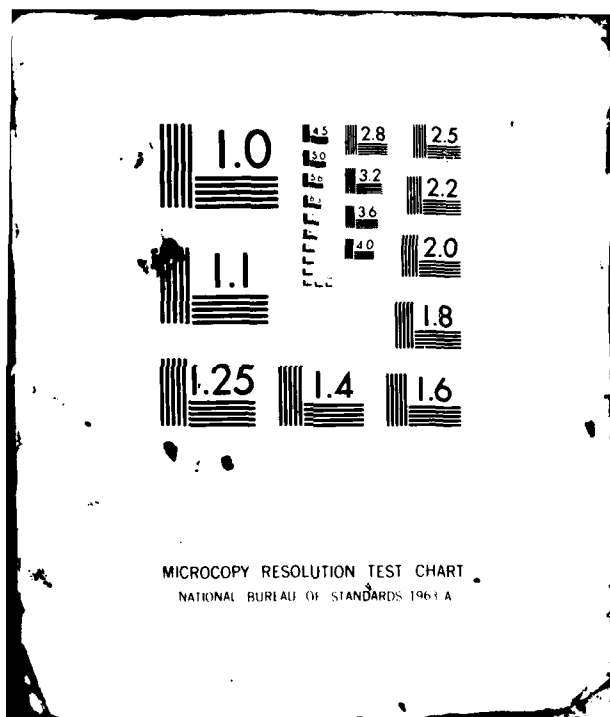
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POLICY DILEMMAS IN BRAZIL-AFRICA RELATIONS

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Policy Dilemmas in Brazil-Africa Relations

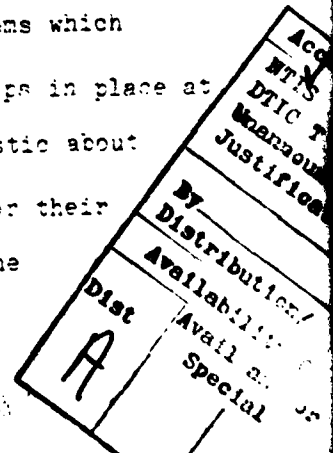
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(1/22/82)

Brazil's Third World Thrust

During the 1970s, Brazil established itself as a rising middle power in international relations, with credible aspirations for eventual major power status.¹ It was often cited as one of the notable regional power centers or key countries rising in the Third World, the benefactor of a broad process of multipolarity which was bringing more significant actors to greater autonomy and relevance in the global system.² As the result of a vigorous diversification of relations toward Western Europe and Japan and the development of a stronger national industrial base, American influence on Brazil declined.³ The position of the United States in Brazil's foreign relations became less conspicuous, although far from marginal.⁴

While not a fully industrialized economy, Brazil is nevertheless assuming the profile of an importer of raw materials and an exporter of manufactured goods and services. Its international conduct over the last decade has been greatly affected by the new interests and vulnerabilities which it is taking on. Even greater changes can be expected in the decade of the 1980s because of a set of severe energy, debt burden, technology, and trade problems which cannot be adequately addressed within the patterns of relationships in place at the end of the 1970s. Brazilian observers generally are pessimistic about really substantial gains from the North-South dialogue, either for their country or for the Third World as a whole. Nor do they expect the



establishment of the New International Economic Order, because of the resistance of the industrialized states to major concessions beyond simply conceptual or procedural matters.⁵

During the Geisel government (1974-79) Brazil's principal diplomatic initiatives were carried out with the industrialized nations of the West, to the point where these partners came to be taken for granted. Under President Figueiredo there has been a decided concentration on Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East, in about that order of priority. Although at first this shift toward Third World dealings could have been interpreted merely as a further diversification of relations in different directions, it now appears that Brazil is adopting a qualitatively new foreign policy stance and a philosophy to go with it, both well attuned to shifting currents in global and inter-LDC (less developed country) politics. Without rejecting ties with the North and with a minimum of stridency, Brazil appears to be systematically making greater use of the Third World components of its mixed identity to advance its development and major power plans as a capitalist Third World leader rather than as an imminent aspirant to a formal position in the ranks of the industrial West.

The key to this strategy is advancement of the concept of South-South cooperation, a "horizontal" relationship among developing countries to serve as an alternative to (but not a complete replacement of) their "vertical" relations of dependency with the North. Brazil's diplomacy did not originate the South-South idea, but has seized upon it imaginatively and discretely as a symbol upon which to project the claim that, in the Third World, Brazil's cooperation is of a more desirable quality--a new, long-term, more useful and less exploitative kind than that of either East or West. Within this strategy, criticism of the disappointments of the North-South dialogue can be used to

promote the "imperative" of South-South cooperation. Most productive would be trilateral cooperation among CPEL, the Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs), and Fourth World countries, but in any multilateral South-South scheme that may evolve, Brazil's economic size, intermediate development level, and comparative advantages as the largest NIC would assure it of a major global role among LDCs because of a wide range of possible complementarities.

Beyond the utility of specific bilateral South-South relationships, the concept provides opportunity for LDC initiative in a broader vision of structural change which does not depend on the generosity of the North. Some Third World ideologues speak of forging an LDC "collective self-reliance" which would "delink" the South from the exploitation of the North. Brazil does not share this radical interpretation, but does see its South-South relations as an important strategy to gain more autonomy from the capitalist centers in its own capital formation by developing Third World markets and sources of supply for its industry. In this sense, the Third World thrust is a follow-up to Brazil's 1970s diversification among capitalist centers; i.e., toward Western Europe and Japan and away from the United States.⁶ It remains to be seen whether the rather inelastic markets of most of the Third World will be economically dynamic enough to serve Brazil's developmental aspirations in this manner, but more immediate and concrete benefits have already come in the form of thriving trade with and services provided to other LDCs. By 1980, 42.8% of Brazil's total trade turnover was with Third World countries, up from 30.9% in 1975. The practicality of the South-South drive was described by Ambassador Paulo Tarso Flecha de Lima, head of the Foreign Ministry's Commercial Promotion Section: "One of the decisive plays of Brazilian foreign policy was to give up the monotonous accompaniment of the North-South dialogue--essentially a mere succession of complaints--and turn toward a South-South dialogue that yields foreign exchange and political importance for us."

Subsaharan Africa has been the location of Brazil's greatest recent initiatives anywhere outside the South American continent. These dealings, in which Brazil is the major partner, could foreshadow some characteristics of Brazil's more participationist Third World stance and provide insight into the viability of closer relationships between more and less developed Third World states. The progress of Brazil's relations with Africa has been remarkable over the last decade, with broadening areas of cooperation and complementarity. It may well be the most diversified cross-continental relationship among LDCs, yet it has proceeded without any long-range planning or a sense of coordination. Most surveys of the topic are optimistically hopeful that this cooperation will continue to grow. However, as relations since 1975 have passed from the declarative rhetorical stage to the stage of realization of projects, from occasional surges to steady amplification, both sides need a clearer appreciation of what the other can or cannot contribute. Choices will have to be made, and some risks taken. From the African perspective, Brazil must produce to satisfaction for the ties to strengthen; from the Brazilian side the attention paid to Africa must also carry a tangible payload. Some disappointments and points of attrition have already arisen as the relationship becomes more intense. Unintended consequences may arise, as each side relates to the other from a different set of national circumstances, priority of interests, and global perspectives.

The intent of this essay is to evaluate the political aspects of Brazil-Africa relations comprehensively, with emphasis on the bilateral. The history of these relations is available elsewhere, while economic feasibilities, trade, technical cooperation, country profiles, effects on multilateral relations, and other more specific topics will be considered in later studies.⁸

Third World Political Credentials and Capitalistic Economic Interests

The dilemmas and contradictions of Brazil's position between First and Third Worlds clearly impinge on relations with Africa in advantageous and disadvantageous ways, requiring considerable deliberate effort to assert bona fide Third World membership while maintaining favorable bilateral relationships with key countries of the First World. The numerous Africans now seeing Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, and Sao Paulo for the first time find a largely capitalist model, widespread foreign investment, and a level of technological development so far beyond that of their continent that doubts set in about whether Brazil is in fact typical of the Third World, or whether it is of the Third World at all. A visit to Bahia, with its African cultural components, modifies this perception somewhat, as does the argument that Brazil's recent success in modernization in a range of conditions in the tropics is more relevant to the experience of Africa than are the models of Northern Hemisphere states. Even after this attempt at cultural-technological balance, Africans see Brazil as large and powerful, while Brazilians describe their nation as poor, weak, and much more limited in potential to cooperate with Africa than the major states already involved.

Ironically, vis a vis the North, at the same time Brazil has been strongly resisting formal institutionalization of the economic categories of Advanced Developing Countries and Newly Industrializing Countries, with the conviction that its inclusion in such divisive groupings would carry more hindrances than privileges. One of the probable negative consequences of such a restrictive categorization or supposed "promotion" for Brazil would be to threaten its Third World credentials to an extent damaging to its successful commercial

Policy. Further, it would be expected to grant concessions to, and to give up preferences in favor of, those Third (or Fourth) World countries lower on the development scale, including almost all of Africa, which it is not prepared to do. (Current Brazilian policy defends the validity of the Third World category even while acknowledging the heterogeneity of the countries composing that group.)

The conservative character of Brazil's government and its "born again" anticolonialism after steady support for Portugal caused frictions with Africa up to the end of the 1970s. Brasilia saw it necessary to compensate for those doubts with a number of diplomatic plays to win African confidence, such as rapid recognition of the MPLA (1975), condemnation of Zionism as "racism" in the U.N. General Assembly (1975), and visits to Brazil by revolutionary leaders of continental stature, such as Kenneth Kaunda (1979), Luis Cabral (1980), and Sekou Toure (1980). Of special effectiveness was a well-timed, heavily political tour of Foreign Minister Saraiva Guerreiro in June 1980 to speak to the chiefs of government of the Front Line States-Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Angola. The tone of this visit, while certainly not radical by African standards, contrasted strongly with that of the 1972 trip of former foreign minister Gibson Barbosa to eight countries of the continent during a harsher Brazilian regime supporting Portuguese colonialism and caught up in the euphoria of the "economic miracle". Barbosa dealt heavily in commercial and cultural affinity matters, avoided discussions about liberation movements, and announced in Nairobi that Brazil did not recognize the existence of a Third World.

The success of each of these moves was interpreted by the Foreign Ministry as a "green light" of acceptance for further approximation to the continent. Still, the political distance involved in accomodation regularly provides some

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interesting incongruities, as in the case of the domestically conservative Brazilian government's offer to provide humanitarian aid (but not arms) to black liberation movements,⁹ or its assistance in parts of Mozambique's land reform and state collective farm projects.¹⁰

Whereas African foreign policy style tends to be highly political, symbolic, and rhetorical. Brazil's is marked by cautiousness, restraint, nonideological pragmatism, and non-confrontation, with a clear reluctance to take unambiguous positions on controversial issues not directly affecting the country. Even though political interests may eventually accrue with the development of commercial involvement in Africa, Brazil resists engagement in new entanglements in the Third World now that it has set itself free from the former system of political obligations to Washington.¹¹ Policy on Africa can serve as proof of Brazil's political independence, but the African image of Brazil as a country still largely in the U.S. sphere of influence has not died. Thus, to gain favor with Africa, Brazil has had to be more outspoken on issues affecting that continent than on those elsewhere in the Third World (with the partial exception of Arab-Israeli questions). That posture has evolved only gradually and with constant African prodding. Not a member of the nonaligned movement but wanting to project a measure of independence congenial to those who are, Brazil usually adopts most of the essentials of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) consensus as its own, with at least sufficient difference from typical Western positions to fall clearly within the moderate Third World group rather than the liberal Western one.

Most African governments appear to regard Brazil as friendly to their cause, even though they would prefer more militance and action on matters concerning anticolonialism and national liberation movements in Southern Africa. Until now they have been satisfied, although less than completely,

with the symbolism of a change in pronouncements, because Brazil's declaratory allegiance is seen as largely exemplary. It is not yet in the problem-solving stage in Africa, although it is an official observer at OAU meetings. African diplomats value Brazil's votes and its consideration of their points of view in policy formation, but reserve their greatest efforts to change the behavior of those powers which have some political impact on the continent, namely the great powers and Cuba. Should Brazil continue to expand its interests in Africa at a rapid pace, however, it is not inconceivable that it may be pressured into assuming more assertive actions than heretofore. Countries which are pivotal in Brazil's African relations, such as Nigeria and Angola, would be in the best position to exert influence. Brazil is susceptible to such influence because it is trying to make an impression on Africa much more than the reverse.

Both African and Western governments are starting to ascribe some significance to Brazil's stands on African matters. Brazil, in turn, sees an image value in its Africa policy for its emerging global role. It is therefore paying more attention to articulating positions on African questions in talks with a wider range of countries, yet without allowing itself to be drawn out or endangering the good will it has carefully managed to build up there. The American government, for one example, after initially strong disapproval came to see Brazil's presence in Marxist Angola as a Western influence for moderation, and consultations on African matters between the two governments occur with some frequency. Yet Brazil definitely does not interpret its actions in Angola as having political significance as a Western presence. Both Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany and an unspecified African leader during Saraiva Guerreiro's trip were cited in the Brazilian press as having suggested that Brazil mediate in some fashion in the dispute over Namibian

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Independence. The government declined on the basis of insufficient political dialogue with the South African government, claiming no entree with Pretoria which the West lacks.

Beyond cognizance of the country's political weaknesses and vulnerabilities in Africa, and a sense of the dysfunctionality of political involvement beyond symbolism for its own purposes, Brazilian policy reflects the fact that its political relations are used primarily to break ground and establish a climate of confidence and a framework for commercial relations, the principal reason for the African initiatives. Thus, African receptivity to Brazil varies between the pragmatists, who are interested primarily in economic contributions, and the ideologues or militants, who place political considerations foremost and criticize Brazilian Third Worldism as insincere and opportunistic. While Brazilian actions are tailored to appeal to the first group, which has predominated in official circles, a least-common-denominator type of attention is paid to the claims of the more vociferous purists, mainly intellectuals and radical leaders, who usually remain unassuageable. Because of the Brazilian government's sensitivity to this skepticism, it considers the state of relations with Angola and (particularly) Mozambique as the litmus test of acceptance by socialist or radical regimes. Brazil courted both capitals persistently. Rapprochement with Angola was gained with relative ease and speed, but only with the successful September 1981 visit of Mozambique's Foreign Minister Chissano to Brazil were political relations with Maputo really thawed. (Diplomatic relations have been established since 1975, but neither country has yet established an embassy in Brasilia, ostensibly for financial reasons.)

More than any other single factor, commercial opportunities determine the priority accorded by Brasilia to ties with various countries. Those with

markets for exports (particularly manufactures), projects for Brazilian participation, and resources to sell (particularly petroleum) rank highest on the list. Greatest activity has been carried on with Nigeria, Angola, Gabon, the Ivory Coast, and (recently) Mozambique, with a lower level of interaction with Senegal, Ghana, Zaire, and Zambia. Brazil maintains formal diplomatic relations with nearly every African country, but dealings with most of them, such as Tanzania and Guinea, have been relatively sporadic and minimal, often largely for the symbolic political content involved. In future practice, those stable countries that can pay their way will receive the bulk of the attention, while most poorer countries or those with less trade complementarity will be limited to "political relations." Portuguese-speaking Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tome fit in as special Fourth World exceptions, the only ones in which the relationship is heavily donative on Brazil's part.

As a matter of strategy, Foreign Ministry officials dealing with Africa first set about firming up the ties with the generally more moderate West African governments (the linkage of longest standing), recently turned to thorough consolidation of deeper relations with the socialist Lusophone states, and in the near future, building upon Angola and Mozambique, intend to extend some attention to the other countries of Southern Africa and the East Coast. In practice, however, there has been some overlapping of stages as opportunities presented themselves.

If Brazil has found it difficult in Africa to maintain its preferred separation of economics from politics, a new dimension of its presence there has the potential for carrying clear political connotations. According to the International Defense Review, Brazil is now the sixth largest exporter of arms: although the exact size of the trade is difficult to determine, about \$1 billion worth of a wide variety of military equipment was exported yearly in

1980 and 1981, with sales in rapid expansion.¹² Most of Brazil's arms trade is carried out with the Middle East and Latin America, but Africa is now being approached with hopes of cutting into French, British, Belgian, Italian and Soviet markets. Nigeria, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are the potential customers who have shown some interest, but as yet they have not closed purchase agreements. Togo purchased six jet fighter trainers, and Gabon bought for official and military use four transport aircraft and over a dozen patrol boats for coastal surveillance.

Weapons sales contracts are made largely from government to government, with the Brazilian military attache serving as an initial contract point. For this reason, Brazil is considering creation of military attache positions in more key African embassies. Military cooperation agreements, such as for training and technical advisors, cannot be ruled out but more significant military ties do not appear imminent. Brazil's military sales policy is attractive to Africa because of appropriate technology, effectiveness, price competitiveness, and lack of political preconditions. The National Security Council rules on all sales, with rather little coming to light on its political standards, but the only apparent members of the certain veto list appear to be national liberation movements, Cuba, and South Africa. (Both the USSR and China have shown definite interest.) At least three cases of political veto have been reported: Somalia, which wanted to pay cash for twenty Xavante jet fighters to use against Ethiopia in 1978, Ian Smith's Rhodesia, which wanted Xavantes to use against black guerrillas, and South Africa, which wanted a Bandeirante military transport.¹³ Brazil's public policy is to avoid shipping arms to countries at war, a principle it flagrantly violated, however, in the case of Iraq in its war with Iran. Brazilian weapons have also seen combat in expressive numbers in Libyan hands during the brief 1977 Libya-Egypt border

skirmish and in Libya's invasion of Chad in late 1980. The latter action created considerable concern in Lagos, capital of Brazil's chief African partner, but no repercussions on relations with Nigeria could be detected. The case could nevertheless be indicative of potential political embarrassments for Brazil because of the uses to which its weapons may be put. In the short run, to the contrary, the sale of the armored cars used has been only enhanced by descriptions of their battlefield performance.

A Matter of Race and Culture

Because Brazil has made so much of its cultural similarities and its system of race relations in its approach to Africa since 1961, and because culture and race are important reference points in the African world view, the accuracy of that claim of affinity is crucial to success as relations intensify. African unfamiliarity with Brazil in the early 1970s and previously caused many to accept at face value official Brazil's assertions of the prestige enjoyed by the African element of Brazil's culture and of the inexistence of a racial problem. The disparity between what they were led to expect and what they saw and experienced in actual stays in Brazil has caused numerous African diplomats and businessmen to criticize the Gilberto Freyre-inspired white view of race and culture in Brazil.¹⁴ At first discretely and then more openly they have been challenging the lack of blacks in higher positions and the scarcity of blacks in the relationship with Africa. Several initial African-Brazilian intellectual dialogues have quickly raised this sensitive issue to a point of mutual uneasiness, in which even rather liberal Brazilians feel uncomfortable.¹⁵ Africans find not only strong racial discrimination in Brazil, but they also find that Brazil's whites give little

prestige to the country's African roots. Brazil's Africanity is seen by these foreign visitors as frozen, with the quaint, anthropological aspects of a Museum exhibit in Bahia, rather separate from modern Brazil and more appreciated by Africans than by Brazilians themselves.

Brazil is not yet a common topic in African newspapers and magazines, but the reports which do appear, often on the occasion of the visit to Brazil of a major figure, are beginning to contain references to this counter-image. Despite Leopold Senghor's earlier unreserved praise of Afro-latinite, and despite Brasilia's attempts to control the exchange for public relations purposes, the cultural affinities assertion may become an impediment as the real status of Afro-Brazilians becomes more widely known in Africa. Even African leaders sympathetic to the economic advantages of the relationship might find it difficult to justify morally the de facto exclusion of blacks from Brazil-Africa relations when Brazil claims to be second only to Nigeria in size of black population.

Brazilian authorities of course, prefer to see Brazil-Africa relations progress on their own merits, with neither side using the relationship to push for internal political changes in the other. They are especially critical of the validity of parallels drawn between Brazil's racial system and the evolution of the racial issue in the United States, which is an approach taken by both Africans and Americans. Some black Brazilian intellectuals, however, would very much like to see an explicit connection made between the Africa policy and Brazil's racial system, to benefit the condition of Brazil's blacks.

Could Brazil become the target of an African "humanization" campaign on behalf of the small but vocal black civil rights movement as relations deepen and Brazilian blacks gain political consciousness? Nigeria may prove to be the key actor on the African side, given its probable position as one of the top

ten foreign countries for Brazil in this decade. President Shagari's expression of Nigerian concern for blacks everywhere as a principle and his use of the term "diaspora" to describe the forced scattering of blacks by the slave trade presage a more assertive political stance, at least in rhetoric. At present the African governments are more attentive to racial developments in South Africa, and remain pragmatically willing to facilitate ties with Brazil for economic reasons. They still see Brazil's race relations as an internal matter, although several diplomats have been involved in racial incidents. It is not beyond conjecture, however, that African governments important to Brazil may quietly make representation to the Brazilian government to address the situation of Afro-Brazilians, to obtain acknowledgment of the problem and visible progress toward solution before relations are allowed to grow really intimate. This supposition could become more likely if the black civil rights movement expands but is repressed. On the other hand, in Brazil's current political climate, race is only barely nascent as an issue and is far overshadowed by larger questions of social justice and political liberties for the population as a whole. This contradiction in Brazil's approach to Africa therefore highlights yet another rhetoric versus performance question implicit in the political consequences of the country's newfound official Third Worldism.

Brazil and the Established Powers

Brazil's official position is that the country is not out to replace any of the established powers in Africa or to duplicate their practices, which would merely be to implant a variant of neocolonialism. In order to present itself competitively as a new kind of option and to overcome the advantages enjoyed by powers currently active in Africa, Brazil has emphasized affinities

growing from cultural, climatological, and geographical similarities. The image-conscious vocabulary used includes "cooperation," "mutuality of interests," "balance of advantages," "horizontal relations," and "South-South relations," in an attempt to develop a new terminology and style for what is in fact a pioneering operation among LDCs. Although Brazil is willing in principle to lend modest disaster or refugee aid, so far almost completely through the UN, it does not wish to be cast in the role of a donor nation or one with large scale capabilities for foreign aid. Words such as "assistance" and "help" are therefore carefully avoided, in favor of a phraseology of mutual advantage in which Africans are said to request Brazilian products, services, and expertise, and both sides benefit. Africans do perceive a positive difference relative to the West in Brazilians' more relaxed and cordial style, adaptability to African culture, and lower level of condescension and paternalism, but the commercial promotion and the priority of the profit motive remain similar. Unlike the major powers of East or West, Brazil does not export ideology or social planning, nor does cooperation with Brazil bring sovereignty concerns or implications for East-West or African politics. Unlike India, Pakistan, and South Korea, Brazil does not involve large numbers of Brazilian laborers in its projects, with some staying behind as potentially unwelcome by-products of a construction job.

Beyond touting its medium level of development, to which Africans can relate easily, Brazil is willing to take risks greater than those run by the United States or European powers, to barter, and to extend more favorable benefits. For the time being, the African venture is being subsidized as an investment in developing what is for Brazil a sizable future market which established powers see as of marginal importance. Lower prices on simpler but more durable ("tropicalized") goods are combined with technical assistance and

training on the more sophisticated purchases to establish competitiveness against existing sources of supply or consumer preferences. Brazilian salesmen stress willingness to transfer intermediate or appropriate technology to Africa without mystification, and to train local skilled labor, but some Africans comment that such transfer in practice is not as rapid or as complete as they would like and that it is a lower priority for Brazil than is trade. Further, Brazil's reluctance to make investments, stemming from lack of experience in the practice, capital shortages, or concerns about instability, is criticized by them as ignoring an important area of contribution. Commercial relations with Africa in the recent past have suffered from Brazil's overconcentration on what it can sell, and less concern about what it can buy. Within its limits, Brazil has been generous in granting lines of supplier's credits, but is unable to compete with larger powers. Even so, some loans may have to be renegotiated or become de facto write-offs.

Only recently have Africans come to consider some of the limitations on Brazil's cooperation, having earlier tended to regard it as in the same league with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), or "Club of Paris," members. Brazil was seen as a well-advanced country presenting a useful but previously unknown alternative for countries, such as Nigeria and Guinea, which wished to diversify their foreign relations. Brazil's domestic demands and priorities; its status as a major debtor, a large petroleum importer, and a technology-importing nation; and its insistence on ultimate profitability will restrict the extensiveness of its activities and the number and choice of countries with which it will become deeply involved.

Brazilian technology and products are suitable for any African application and are competitive. But as contracts multiplied and initial dabbling yielded to major projects, there was an irony of success for the Foreign Ministry.

Once political transit had finally been gained through painstakingly patient efforts, economic feasibilities became much more pressing because of African and Brazilian domestic difficulties. Brazil's lending capacity slackened just when Africa required easier loan terms. Joint ventures with third countries would be one solution to this problem, along with association with the larger local companies. Beyond maintaining its own agencies in several capitals, for example, the Bank of Brazil is associated with the International Bank of West Africa, a French concern and a major financial force in the region. In order to render economically feasible what is politically desirable, Brazil is trying to arrange triangular deals with African initiative, Brazilian expertise, and third party hard currency finance. Cooperation with Portugal in the Lusophone states has been discussed. Among other potential partners are European countries without their own African networks, such as Scandinavia; West Germany and Belgium have already discussed the possibility with Brazilian representatives.

Present multilateral schemes, such as those of the World Bank, the UN Development Program, or the European Development Fund, are still designed to operate in a North-South direction and to rely on existing systems. Ironically, even OPEC finance channeled to Africa through Western Europe has tended to reinforce the hegemonic position of the established powers. To offset these disadvantages, Brazil is trying to establish the technological assistance principle that, in the cause of South-South relations, preference in execution should be given to other LDCs when multilateral funds design projects. Intergovernmental organizations have sponsored several conferences on technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC), but do not act in a practical way as if they are aware of and responsive to the capabilities and institutions of more advanced LDCs to meet the needs of poorer ones.

Cooperation with OPEC's development fund would be an asset for Brazil, which is already sensitive to defusing the charge that its African venture is largely a front to channel activity of multinational corporations under a false South-South label. Brazil therefore must be careful not to appear to be a tropical surrogate for the economic or political interests of a major power, a sort of "commercial Cuba" in Africa. It desires a major role with at least the appearance of autonomy in any multilateral operation. Yet if the established powers have been reluctant to yield position to a newcomer, the Arabs have proven very cautious in their finances and, until late 1980, slow to help Brazil with petrodollars. In the name of South-South cooperation, however, partnership with OPEC in the Third World may be more likely in the future. An indication of this was the announcement in mid-1981 of a coking coal extraction project in Mozambique, with Arab money and Brazilian expertise and shipping. Such cooperation facilitates commercial exchange by giving Mozambique something to trade for Brazilian products, without the need for financing. Brazilians would like to extend this type of cooperation to oil exploration and railroad construction, among others.

Brazilian Policy Toward Southern Africa

The most problematic region of Africa for Brazilian diplomacy has been Southern Africa, where Brasilia's previous support for Portuguese colonialism, its unwillingness to follow fully the African line toward South Africa, and Marxist governments in Luanda and Maputo have given rise to uncomfortable incidents, internal political disputes, attempts at mollification, and delayed accomplishments.

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In the cases of Angola and Mozambique, Brazil would like to see the emergence in the longer run of a Portuguese-speaking community of nations with Brazil as major partner, but because of the pre-1974 connotation of the "Afro-Luso-Brazilian Community" notion as a prop for Portuguese colonialism, it is still too early to float the idea. Timing is crucial. Brazil's political acceptance in Lusophone Africa is too recent and too hard-won to bear the creation of such a multilateral cooperation scheme yet, because the Africans involved might well take Brazil's support for the idea as indication of sphere of influence ambitions. Brasilia regards with favor the steps already taken since 1979 by the five Lusophone states to exchange ideas and coordinate international action, without the participation of Portugal and therefore in contradistinction to the neocolonialist implications of the British and French systems. Brazil would prefer to see the gradual development of a "community of equals" on African initiative, with Brazil invited to join only when African confidence in its intentions is higher.

Meanwhile, Brazil has become one of the significant trade, aid, and investment partners of Angola and Mozambique, aided by the low level of attention paid by Portugal to its ex-colonies and by the recent interest of these countries in diversifying away from heavy reliance on the Soviets and Cubans. Brazilian Africanists are convinced that Brazil stands in good stead to take advantage of the growing African perception that Soviet help remains attractive only during the period of struggle and that time immediately following independence, but proves ineffective and meager in building a sound economy. Although Brazil is uncomfortable with the Cuban presence in Angola (it has not maintained relations with Havana since 1964), the Foreign Ministry is gambling on the stability of the MPLA government, is reluctant to irritate it, and so supports the questionable MPLA contention that the Cuban soldiers

are present only as a counter to the South African threat. To date, there is no evidence suggesting that the Soviet or Cuban presence per se has been a major factor impeding Brazilian rapprochement with Angola and Mozambique; to the contrary, Brazil may well have benefited from the exclusion or limitation of Western competition. The instability caused by Angola's internal fighting and attacks from South Africa, however, have delayed the realization of as much progress as Brazil and Angola have already agreed upon. On the other hand, the continued pace of the relationship in spite of Agostinho Neto's death indicated momentum and some institutionalization on Luanda's part. Absence of Angolan and Mozambican representatives in Brazil has also proved a hindrance, but diplomats of the three countries work together rather closely at the U.N.

Brazil has been vehement and rhetorical in condemning recent South African attacks (and even rumored preparations for attack) on Angola and Mozambique. It recognizes the Southwest African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) as the representative of the people of Namibia, supports the outlines of the approach of the Western contact group, and prefers a Zimbabwe-type settlement there, but resists the establishment in Brazil of a SWAPO office. Regularly criticizing Apartheid, Brazil has gone so far in the U.N. (mid-1981) as proposing compulsory and mandatory sanctions against South Africa, as a cutoff of military sales and cooperation, petroleum, transportation links, and cultural ties, as well as a general retraction of commerce, credit, and investments.

Beyond rhetoric, however, Brazil has only very gradually weakened its own ties, still refuses to break relations with South Africa, and carries on a significant level of trade with the Republic. Varig still maintains a Rio-Johannesburg air route. Official relations with South African diplomats in Brasilia are correct but aloof; in deference to enhanced harmony in the Third World policy, representatives from that embassy are not invited to Foreign

Ministry occasions with a Third World component and have considerable difficulty in being received in the ministries. In its Pretoria legation, Brazil maintains only a charge-d'affaires with the rank of second secretary, with no trade promotion activities in the country. Black African radicalization toward South Africa has made less acceptable Brazil's contention that a thread of representation is needed to maintain access to information and to opposition elements and to official communication during negotiations on Namibia. African demands for total isolation of South Africa, persistently articulated during Saraiva Guerreiro's Front Line Tour and reinforced by the ties with Angola and Mozambique, are causing greater pressure on Brasilia, which continues to vacillate with occasional small concessions timed to garner some political value. The Foreign Ministry still finds it incongruous and unprofitable to yield to the severance demands of African states, several of which maintain their own economic relations with South Africa.

The American turn of policy toward Southern Africa with the Reagan government's East-West orientation caused apprehension in Brasilia, which has taken pains publicly to place some distance between itself and Washington on these matters. Although Brasilia shares some concerns about Soviet and Cuban influence in the region, it views events there with much more sympathy for African interpretations and with a political rather than a military criterion. American support for the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the opening of a "new phase" in Washington's relationship with Pretoria, while not yet causing open opposition, have moved the Brazilian government from its previous indifference to American initiatives in Africa. Washington's concrete support for opposition elements in Angola would certainly cause a significant strain in its relations with Brazil, probably a conspicuously public one placing Brazil on the side of a Marxist government.

Ill-founded rumors about supposed American interest in a South Atlantic Treaty Organization (SATO), with South African membership, also clashed with Brazil's less than comfortable position on South Africa, its regionalist idea of the South Atlantic as a conceptual link with Africa, and with the role of Angola as one of the chief pillars of the African venture. The Foreign Ministry denies the existence of a Soviet military threat there and, as a merely semantic counterweight, some spokesmen have begun to refer to the South Atlantic as an "avenue," "basin," or "frontier" of vital national interest and a "zone of peace," pointing up a desire to prolong its status as the most demilitarized ocean in the world. This affirmation allows Brazil to take an offensive stand against persistent African accusations of intent to participate in a SATO, and to stake a claim to a political role in South Atlantic affairs, even before it has a blue water navy. Because this interest in keeping the South Atlantic from becoming a geopolitical chessboard is shared by Black Africa, and during 1981 appeared in joint communiques with Nigeria, Senegal, and the Congo, the concept may be further developed as an indigenous strategic doctrine to promote local impact on Western policymaking on the issue.¹⁶

How Deep and Lasting a Relationship?

The durability of Brazil-Africa relations as a consequential link depends upon a number of political factors which are just now being tested. Internal political forces in Brazil are among these, for the future effects on foreign policy of the political opening, or its occlusion, are not well defined. Brazil's political model and its international economic position are being thoroughly debated for the first time since 1964, as its internal economic troubles mount. In the words of the prominent economist Celso Furtado, "How

can we visualize the role which ought to belong to Brazil in the regulation of the Third World without first inquiring if this country will set a course or will continue deflecting without knowing to which port it is heading?"¹⁷

Within the government, the lines of African policy are now apparently well accepted, although conservative naval sectors voiced opposition to policy toward Southern Africa from 1975 to 1977 and still have quiet reservations about the South Atlantic policy. The Foreign Ministry has had a free hand as frontrunner and innovator in setting political, economic and financial policy toward Africa, stressing the long run view but with no clear idea where it all will lead to. Other ministries dealing in foreign affairs (such as the Treasury and Planning Ministries) are more prone to be wary of the uncertainties and costs. For example, cultural relations and technological assistance are especially vulnerable to budget-trimming. A serious expansion of the relationship would bring in new political actors and subsequent policy complications. With time, in view of the degree of subsidization involved, the venture will need some respectable breakthrough to overcome skepticism in the bureaucracy outside the Foreign Ministry. The planned visits of President Figueiredo to Africa, originally for 1981, and of Nigerian President Shagari to Brazil the same year may have been opportune moments to gain such political coverage, but Figueiredo's recuperation from a heart attack delayed both occasions.

However recent and thin it may be, Brazil has a small cadre of bureaucrats with experience in African affairs, encouraged by new Foreign Ministry incentives to play up service in Africa for career advancement. They are complemented by some quality opposite numbers in private sector activities such as trade, banking, and services, with Nigeria and the Ivory Coast being the countries of greatest initiative on behalf of business. The Foreign Ministry

still has to "sell" Africa to the cautious business community, for its plans and political preparations run well ahead of private sector follow-up. The academic world remains weak in Africa expertise, somewhat a reflection of its peripheral position in Brazilian foreign relations in general. Editorials on African questions have been more frequent in the quality press in recent years. Although certain foreign policy stances toward Africa have occasioned controversy, the consensus on the present course of action appears to enjoy broad public support. Most of the foreign policy community and the small attentive public on the matter appear to see Africa as a natural location for projection of a Brazilian presence, even though disagreements arise concerning time frames, types of activities, and which countries to deal with. Political instability, organizational weaknesses and expertise on Brazil on the African side have been more problematical, although the level of acceptance for Brazil is high there.

The last few years have seen the establishment of institutionalized frameworks for cooperation with numerous treaties and joint commissions, but the problem of consolidation or follow through in sustaining initiatives continues to hinder real progress on a broad front. The next several years will be difficult ones for Brazil-Africa because of economic crises on both sides, a decline in African ability to pay, and Brazil's search for goods to take in return for its manufactures. There is also an imbalance in exchange of officials, in that lately many more African leaders are visiting Brazil than vice-versa. Brazilian officials are more willing and able than previously to gauge critically the feasibility of Africa projects, while African contact with Brazil has enabled both sides to start a direct exchange of information to overcome mutual stereotypes induced by prior acceptance of American and European images of the two areas.

Only the results after several years of the recently more intense interchange between Brazil and Africa will demonstrate whether Brazil is able to offer a new type of cooperative alternative to Africa or whether there will be essentially a smaller-scale reproduction of the characteristics of post-colonial Western relations with Africa. Despite South-South rhetoric, it remains to be proven that developing countries are less motivated by self-interest than are developed ones. In the meantime, the connection bears close observation, because if the Brazil-Africa attempt falls short of mutual advantage, the viability of the whole South-South concept can be thrown into serious question.

Endnotes

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²Raimo Vayrynen, "Economic and Military Position of the Regional Power Centers," Journal of Peace Research 16 (1979): 349-369.

³Robert Wesson, The United States and Brazil: Limits of Influence. (New York: Praeger, 1981).

⁴Riordan Roett, "Brazilian Foreign Policy: Options in the 1980s" in Thomas C. Bruneau and Philippe Faucher, eds. Authoritarian Capitalism: Brazil's Contemporary Economic and Political Development. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), p. 179.

⁵See, for example, the criticism of the Brandt Report by two high-placed Brazilian diplomats in Roberto Abdenur and Ronaldo Sardenberg, "Notas sobre las relaciones Norte-Sur y El Informe Brandt," Estudios Internacionales, No. 54 (April-June 1981), pp. 166-200.

⁶Joao Luis Ribeiro Fragoso, "As reformulacoes na politica externa brasileira nos anos 70," Estudos Afro-Asiaticos 5 (1981):47.

⁷"Na batalha da balanca," Veja (December 23, 1981), p. 71.

⁸A history of Brazil's relations with Africa can be found in the following sources:

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⁹Latin America Weekly Report (May 30, 1980), p. 12.

¹⁰Latin America Weekly Report (June 6, 1980), p. 8.

¹¹This style is described in Wayne A. Selcher, "Brazil in the World: Multipolarity as Seen by a Peripheral A/C Middle Power," in Elizabeth Ferris and Jennie Lincoln, eds. Latin American Foreign Policies: Global and Regional Dimensions. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), pp. 98-101.

¹²Veja (October 28, 1981), p. 42; Warren Hoge, "Brazil's Arms find Willing Buyers in the Third World," New York Times (August 9, 1981), p. E-3; "Armas: O Brasil invade o mercado mundial," Senhor (February 1981), p. 40.

¹³"O Brasil voando alto," Veja (August 20, 1980), p. 122.

¹⁴On this point, see Anani Izidzienyo and Michael Turner, "African-Brazilian Relations: A Reconsideration," in Wayne A. Selcher, ed., Brazil in the International System: The Rise of a Middle Power (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), pp. 207-214.

¹⁵African views of Brazil's racial system are still scarce in print, but a typical first-hand account is given by the journalist Clem Baiye of the New Nigerian in "Nigerian View of Brazil," West Africa (September 1, 1981), pp. 1655-1657.

¹⁶A similar view from the African side, suggesting a joint Brazil-Nigeria-Angola declaration and naval exercises, is provided in A. Bolaji Akinyemi, "The Need for an African South Atlantic Ocean Organization," Nigerian Forum I (1981):125-130.

¹⁷Celso Furtado, "El orden economico internacional y el Brasil," El Trimestre Economico 48 (1981):533.

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